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IN JOINT OPERATION, U.S. AND U.K. HIT 36 HOUTHI TARGETS IN YEMEN

The US, UK troops bombed Houthi targets at 13 locations in Yemen, with support from Australia, NZ, Bahrain, Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands

STRIKES TO DEGRADE MILITIA'S CAPABILITY: US

The US Central Command in a X post said it struck Houthis' multiple underground storage facilities, command and control, missile systems, UAV storage and operation sites, radars and helicopters. The strikes will degrade Houthis' capabilities to attack navy, merchant vessels in the region, the US said

REBELS WARN OF CONFLICT ESCALATION IN THE REGION

- "These attacks will not discourage Yemeni forces from maintaining their support for Palestinians in the face of the Zionist occupation and crimes," Houthi military spokesman Brig Gen Yahya Saree said
- "The aggressors' airstrikes will not go unanswered," he added

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PM Narendra Modi with Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma during the inauguration and foundation stone laying of various projects in Guwahati on Sunday | PTI

Past govts shut eyes to places of worship, says PM

PM inaugurates Kamakhya temple corridor, other projects worth ₹11,600 crore in Assam

RAMASHANKAR @ Patna

IN a veiled attack on the Congress, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said those who came to power after Independence could not understand the significance of places of worship and set a trend of being ashamed of the country's culture and past for political reasons.

Addressing a gathering in Guwahati after virtually inaugurating and laying the foundation stone for a number of projects in Assam – including the Kamakhya temple corridor project – worth ₹11,599 crore, Modi said no country can grow by erasing its past.

He said he was happy that the situation changed in the past 10 years after the BJP's policies focussed on *vikas* (development) and *virasat* (heritage). Modi added that connecting Assam's historical and spiritual places with modern facilities is a move aimed at preserving these sites and accelerating development.

Noting the growing enthusiasm for spiritual tourism in the country, he mentioned the record footfall of devotees in Varanasi after the completion of the Kashi corridor. "In the past year, 8.5 crore people visited Kashi, more than 5 crore visited Mahakal Lok in Ujjain and over 19 lakh devotees visited Kedardham," the PM said.

He noted that more than 24 lakh people visited Ayodhya after the Ram Temple consecration. He said a similar spectacle would unfold in Guwahati after the Kamakhya corridor project, adding that spiritual tourism can boost the livelihood of even the poorest.

> Those who ran the government for a long time since independence failed to understand the significance of places of worship. They set a trend of being ashamed of their own culture for political gains
>
> PM Narendra Modi

Apart from the ₹498 crore Kamakhya corridor project, the other major projects coming up in Assam include a six-lane road from the new airport terminal (₹358 crore) in Guwahati, upgradation of Nehru Stadium to FIFA standards (₹831 crore), a new sports complex in Chandrapur (₹300 crore), upgradation of 43 roads, including 38 bridges, as a part of South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation Corridor Connectivity at a cost of over ₹3,400 crore.

Misleading ads: PMO directs action against Patanjali

KAVITA BAJELI-DATT @ New Delhi

THE Prime Minister's Office (PMO) has directed the Ayush ministry to take action against Baba Ramdev's Patanjali Ayurved for alleged misleading advertisements about its products. Following the PMO directive on January 24, the Ayush ministry wrote to the Uttarakhand Ayush department on February 2 to "take appropriate action".

The PMO's move came after RTI activist Dr K V Babu complained to it on January 15 flagging Patanjali's repeated violations of the Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act, 1954. Speaking to TNIE, Dr Babu said both the Ayush ministry and the Uttarakhand State Licensing Authority (SLA) had been dragging their feet over Patanjali's misleading advertisements of its drugs for diabetes, obesity, thyroid and heart diseases.

Dr Babu told this paper that his complaints have been pending with the Drugs Controller General of India, the Union Ayush ministry and Uttarakhand SLA since February 2022. Now that the PMO has intervened, there is hope that some action will be taken, he added.

In its letter to the director, Ayurvedic and Unani Services, Dehradun, Uttarakhand, the Ayush ministry said: "Since the subject pertains to continuous violations of the Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act, by Divya Pharmacy (a unit owned by Patanjali), it comes under the jurisdiction of the State Licensing Authority, Uttarakhand. It is requested to examine the matter and take action as deemed appropriate."

GILL GETS GOING AT 3

After a string of failures, Shubman Gill slammed a century (104), his first at No. 3, to put India in driver's seat in second Test against England on Sunday | PTI | P15

Saffron flag re-hoisting stopped, town tense

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Belagavi

TENSION prevailed for some time at MK Hubballi of Kittur taluk after the police on Sunday stopped a 'Chalo Bhagava Abhiyan' rally organised by local Hindu activists to re-hoist a saffron flag again near a Hanuman temple in the town.

The police department had deployed hundreds of policemen all over MK Hubballi town as a precautionary measure, and prohibited the rally, citing that prior permission had not been taken.

Superintendent of Police Bhimashankar Guled, who visited the town, discussed the situation with Chief Executive Officer of MK Hubballi Town Panchayat Ravindra Bagalkoti. He instructed the police staff on the ground to ensure that law and order is maintained. He requested the public too to cooperate with the police.

Last week, an electric wire of a mosque in the town's Gandhi Nagar area got cut and a flag that had a portrait of Tipu Sultan fell down. The incident occurred late in the night and it led to tension in the town the next day. Suspecting it to be an act of mischief, the police summoned Hindu and Muslim leaders to peace in the town.

Following the incident, the local town panchayat staff had removed all saffron and Islamic flags in the town. P6

Top police officers visit MK Hubballi town on Sunday | EXPRESS

Uttar Pradesh ATS arrests MEA staff for spying for ISI

NAMITA BAJPAI @ Lucknow

IN a major breakthrough, the Anti-Terrorist Squad of the Uttar Pradesh police (UP ATS) arrested here an employee of the Indian embassy in Moscow for allegedly spying for Pakistan's ISI. Satendra Siwal, an employee of the Indian Embassy in Moscow, was produced in a local court and sent to 14-day judicial remand. Police sources said, on Monday the ATS would move court to take Siwal's remand. Two mobile phones, an Aadhar Card, a PAN card, an identity card and ₹600 cash were recovered from him.

Siwal was passing on confidential information about defence installations to his ISI handlers across the border for money, UP ATS sources said. He was engaged as the India-based Multi-Tasking Staff at the Indian Embassy in Moscow.

The ATS claimed that it had information from the sources and surveillance that some of the External Affairs ministry employees were being lured by ISI with money to disclose strategic information about Indian defence installations and other details thus posing a serious threat to country's security.

During questioning, he had admitted to having engaged in allegedly spying for the ISI, ATS said in a statement.

EXPRESS READ

NIA creates biometric database of terrorists

New Delhi: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has created a database of biometric and criminal details of terror groups, including Lashkar-e-Taiba and Indian Mujahideen. The database will be stored in a 'head server' at its headquarters here. Sources said the National Terrorism Data Fusion and Analysis Centre (NTDFAC) has been modeled on the lines of the Global Terrorism Database of the USA.

JMM hopeful of winning Jharkhand trust vote today

MUKESH RANJAN @ Ranchi

JHARKHAND Mukti Morcha MLAs returned here on Sunday evening ahead of the floor test in the Assembly on Monday after Champai Soren was sworn in as the chief minister last week.

Soon after Champai's swearing in ceremony around 37 MLAs were taken to a resort in Hyderabad to prevent them from poaching. There they were kept under tight security and were not allowed to meet or talk to anyone even on their mobile phones.

From the airport, the MLAs were taken directly to the circuit house and will stay the night there before going to the assembly on Monday morning.

The MLAs were taken to Hyderabad after rumours spread that JMM does not have the required numbers to pass the floor test in assembly.

Jharkhand assembly has 81 seats. JMM-led alliance has support of 47 MLAs, six more than the half way mark making it a cakewalk for it to win the floor test. JMM has 29 seats, Congress has 17 seats while RJD and CPI (ML) have one seat each. One assembly seat is vacant.

NDA, on the other hand, has a total strength of 32 MLAs. BJP has 26 MLAs, AJSU has 3, NCP (AP) has one seat along with two Independent MLAs.

Though the JMM is confident of winning the trust vote, BJP MLA Biranchi Naryan has said that the Champai government will lose the floor test on Monday.

Had they been so confident of their support then why they were taken to Hyderabad under tight security? he asked.

State govt fixes fares for all cab services

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

THE Transport Department has announced uniform fares for cabs operating in the state. As per the notification, all cab services – be it app-based ride-hailing service providers like Ola and Uber or non-app based taxis – will have to charge as per the new tariff. Cab aggregators are not allowed to collect surge prices from passengers.

As per the new fare structure announced on Saturday, taxis are categorised into three classes based on the cost of the vehicle. For vehicles that cost under Rs 10 lakh, the minimum fare is Rs 100 for up to 4 km and Rs 24 per additional kilometre. For vehicles above Rs 10 lakh and within Rs 15 lakh, the minimum fare for up to 4 km is Rs 115 and Rs 28 for every additional kilometre. P5

LESSON FOR ALL

From verge of closure, govt school has 180 pupils now

VINCENT D'SOUZA @ Mangaluru

A school in Dakshina Kannada, which was supposed to fade into history because of lack of students, has made new history. In 2019, the student strength at Kukrabettu Government Primary School in Marodi village of Belthangady taluk had dropped to just 16. Thanks to the efforts of villagers and Prakash Anchan, president of a committee striving to save and develop government schools, the school now has 180 children.

The school with first to seventh standards was set up 65 years years ago. But four years back, many classrooms were empty without any children. At that point, the alumni of the school contacted Anchan, who is also the chairman of Sri Durga Charitable Trust and who had already revived a school in Bantwal taluk. Together, they came up with a comprehensive plan to save the institution.

The renovated Kukrabettu Government Primary School in Marodi village, Belthangady

First, they formed a committee and asked villagers to pull out their wards from private schools and admit them to the state school. About 40 parents responded positively.

Committee president Jayanth Kotian said that because of their consistent efforts, the school started getting students from not just Marodi, but also from surrounding villages like Peradi, Kashipatna, Kokradi, Savya, Kutluru, Naravi, Shirtadi and others.

The Sri Durga Charitable Trust, which adopted the school, started LKG and UKG to attract more students. Permission was also obtained for English medium classes. Priority was given to quality education by appointing additional honorary teachers. Extracurricular activities like yoga, karate, dance, Yakshagana etc. were encouraged and the trust also arranged a school bus to ferry students from far-off places.

Many other facilities were added with the help of donors. With this, the number of children increased to 80 in 2020 and 120 in 2021. The student strength crossed 140 in 2022. At present, 180 children are studying in the school. It has four permanent teachers, three guest teachers and three honorary teachers, including the headmistress.

To provide digital education to these children from rural parts, a Smart Class facility, costing Rs 2.4 lakh, has been provided to the School by IEEE Advancing Technology for Humanity through its CSR initiative. An eight-room building (about 5,000 square feet) at a cost of Rs 1.10 crore has been constructed with grants from MLA Harish Poonja, MP Nalin Kumar Kateel and Rs 2 lakh donation from Shree Kshetra Dharmasthala Rural Development Project. The building will be inaugurated on February 17. A well-equipped toilet has been constructed at a cost of Rs 10 lakh under MRPL's CSR funds.

MP Suresh does U-turn: Never said divide country

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

BENGALURU Rural Congress MP DK Suresh here on Sunday made a U-turn on his earlier statement on separate nationhood for southern states, which created an uproar and that was also raised during the ongoing Parliament session. "People from BJP are twisting my statement. I never said this country should be divided. They are trying to do politics," he said.

Suresh, younger brother of Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, was visibly perturbed when scores of BJP workers laid siege to his house at Sadashivanagar on Sunday, protesting against his statement. The police whisked away some of the workers and resorted to a lathicharge to bring the situation under control. As some of the workers were injured, BJP state president BY Vijayendra attacked the Congress government and held it responsible for the incident.

"BJP Yuva Morcha workers who were peacefully protesting outside the Bangalore residence of MP D K Suresh who raised the cry for a separate nation subjected to unnecessary lathicharge by the police resulting in serious injuries to the workers. It is a Congress government sponsored hooliganism. BJP will not tolerate anyone questioning sovereignty of India and their actions, no matter how strong they are, until they repent," he posted on 'X'.

Later speaking to reporters, Suresh alleged that BJP is twisting his statement to gain political mileage. He told media persons, "I feel the media is the fourth pillar of democracy. But if it takes a side, I am helpless. My statement was clear, but BJP contorted it. I need not reply to them." CONTINUED ON: P6